Course Syllabus
Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number:	TRT 3421H
Course Name:	Baptism and Christian Initiation in the New Testament and the Church
Campus:	St. George
Location:	Larkin Building, Room LA214

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Jonathan Slater, PhD,
E-mail:	jonathanp.slater@gmail.com

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

TRT1101 or other Introduction to Theology and TRB1501 or other introduction to the New Testament.

Course Description

This course explores the diversity of understandings of becoming a Christian in early Christianity and how these understandings might inform contemporary ecumenical discussion. Topics will include the origins of Christian baptism, and especially John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus, the question of the relationship between baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit in the beginning of the Christian life, development of infant baptism, the interpretation of key New Testament baptismal texts, and baptismal and catechetical developments in the early church. Consideration will be given to the role of critical Biblical scholarship and theological exegesis as it pertains to contemporary controversies and ecumenical developments regarding baptism, confirmation, and the process of Christian Initiation.

Course Methodology

1. Seminar discussion. Class time will focus on discussion of the assigned readings (15% of final grade).

2. Reading Responses. Students will submit reading responses for ten of the weeks of the course. The purpose of these responses is to prepare to engage in discussion. They should consist of six bullet-points responses to one or more of the assigned readings. Three bullet points should be descriptive, identifying particularly significant aspects of the reading. The other three should be evaluative, identifying problematic areas or questions arising from the reading. Both descriptive and evaluative bullet points should be *points* – a couple of sentences at most, not full-blown paragraphs or mini-essays (35% of final grade).

3. Final Paper. Students will write a 12-15 page paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. This will be due April 18 (50% of final grade).

Course Outcomes

Students will demonstrate a critical and broad understanding of the origins and early development of baptism and Christian initiation as reflected in Biblical and early patristic sources. They will be able to articulate a how such an understanding might contribute to contemporary discussions of baptism and Christian Initiation, and will be able to articulate their methodological assumptions with respect to the use of scripture and the development of theological tradition for contemporary theological reflection.

Course Schedule and Resources

The primary text, Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation,* is available for purchase at Crux Books. All other readings are on reserve at the Graham Library or can be accessed online through the course's Blackboard website.

Required Course Texts

- Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, revised and expanded (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007).

Course Schedule

January 11: Introduction

January 18: Becoming Christian – Ecumenical perspectives

- Paul Meyendorff, "Toward Mutual Recognition of Baptism," in Thomas F. Best (ed), *Baptism Today: Understanding, practice, ecumenical implications* (World Council of Churches, 2008), 195-206.

- Paul Fiddes, "Baptism and the Process of Christian Initiation," in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (Sheffield Academic, 2002), 280-303.

January 25: Baptism in the New Testament (1)

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 1-40
- James D. G. Dunn, "Baptism and the Unity of the Church in the New Testament," in *Baptism and the Unity of the Church*, edited by Michael Root and Risto Saarinen (World Council of Churches, 1988), 78-103.

February 1: Baptism in the New Testament (2)

- R.T. France, "Jesus the Baptist?," in Joel Green and M. Turner (eds), *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: essays on the historical Jesus and New Testament christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 94–111.
- Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 159-187.
- John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1258-1272.
- Tricia Gates Brown, *Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social-Scientific Perspective* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 113-125.

February 8: Baptism in the New Testament (3)

- Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 390-408.
- Markus Barth *Ephesians* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 623-627, 687-699.
- Robert W. Wall with Richard B. Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2012), 357-370.
- Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 107-116.

February 15: Family Day/Reading Week

February 22: Becoming Christian in the Pre-Nicene East

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 41-82.
- Nathan Mitchell, "Baptism in the *Didache*," in Clayton Jefford (ed), *The* Didache *in context: Essays on its Text, History and Transmission* (New York: Brill, 1995), 226-255.
- Henny Fiskå Hägg, "Baptism in Clement of Alexandria," in David Hellholm *et. al.* (eds), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* vol 2 (Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 973-987.
- Everett Fergusson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 207-214.

February 29: Becoming Christian in North Africa before Nicea

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 83-95.
- Tertullian, *On Baptism*
- Cyprian, *Epistle 72 & 73*
- Robin Jensen and J. Patout Burns, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The development of its practices and beliefs* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 165-195.

March 7: Becoming Christian in the pre-Nicene West

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 96-114.
- Vermund Blomkvist, "The Teaching on Baptism in the Shepherd of Hermas," in David Hellholm *et. al.* (eds), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* vol 2 (Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 849-870.
- Peter-Ben Smit, "The Reception of the Truth at Baptism and the Church as Epistemological Principle in the Work of Irenaeus of Lyons," *Ecclesiology* 7 (2011), 354-373.
- Anders Ekenberg, "Initiation in the *Apostolic Tradition*," in David Hellholm *et. al.* (eds), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* vol 2 (Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 1011-1034.

March 14: Becoming Christian in the East during the 4th and 5th Centuries

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 115-157.
- Nathan Witkamp, "A Critical Comparison of the So-called 'Lawsuit' in the Baptismal Rites of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Narsai of Nisibis, *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011) 514-542.
- Susana Elm, "Inscriptions and Conversions: Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism," in Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eda), *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 1-35.
- Everett Ferguson, "Preaching at Epiphany: Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom on Baptism and the Church," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 66.1 (March 1997) 1-17.

March 21: Becoming Christian in the West during the 4th and 5th Centuries

- Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 159-200.
- J. Patout Burns, "Baptism as Dying and Rising with Christ in the Teaching of Augustine," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20.3 (2012), 407-438.
- David Wright, "Augustine and the Transformation of Baptism," in Alan Kreider (ed), *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 287-310.

March 28: Infant Baptism

- Anthony Lane, "Did the Apostolic Church Baptise Babies? A Seismological Approach," *Tyndale Bulletin* 55.1 (2004), 111-130.
- Mark Searle, "Infant Baptism Reconsidered," in Maxwell Johnson (ed), *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 365-409
- Julia Smucker, "Community and Discipleship: Toward a Mennonite-Catholic Convergence on Baptism," *Pro Ecclesia* 22.1 (Winter 2013), 69-87.

April 4: Christian Initiation in the Churches Today

- Johnson, 375-450.
- Colin Podmore, "The Baptismal Revolution in the American Episcopal Church: Baptismal Ecclesiology and the Baptismal Covenant," *Ecclesiology* 6 (2010), 8-38.

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at http://portal.utoronto.ca and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask [xxx] for further help.]

Evaluation

Requirements

- Participation in class discussions (15%)
- Responses to assigned readings (35%)
- A major paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor, due April 18. (50%).

Grading System

A+ (90-100)
A (85-89)
A- (80-84)
B+ (77-79)
B (73-76)
B- (70-72)
Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD).

Instructors are not obliged to accept late work, except where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student's control. In such cases, a late penalty is normally not appropriate. Where an Instructor intends to accept and apply penalties to late assignments, this must be set out clearly here in the course syllabus. Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871. A student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).